



Background Guide

United Nations
Human Rights Council

1 | Combating the Exploitation of Children in Armed Conflicts

SDGs: 3. Good Health and Well-being; 4. Quality Education; 16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

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Committee Introduction

The United Nations Human Rights Council is the intergovernmental body whose mission is to protect and promote human rights around the world. Its forty seven member states are expected to uphold human rights standards within their own borders while shouldering the responsibility of holding all UN member states accountable for their actions, encourage inter-state cooperation, deploying fact finding investigations to understand potential or ongoing crises, and drafting resolutions to make recommendations to rectify human rights violations across the globe.

The UNHRC operates within and uses the universal framework and international human rights law as the standard to which these rights should be protected. Documents such as the UN charter, the Universal Declaration on Human rights and the Paris Agreement lay out the foundation for the Human Rights Council to operate and set precedence for signatories around the world.

The Council's work covers a wide range of issues from civil and political rights to social, economic, and cultural protections. Topics frequently include freedom of expression, rights of minority groups, and protections during armed conflict. This wide scope means delegates must approach debates with both empathy and precision while balancing the humanitarian stakes of each crisis with the political and legal realities that define international diplomacy.

That said, it is important that the powers of the UNHRC are understood amongst delegates. As an international body within the United Nations system, the UNHRC lacks the powers to enact legally binding international laws. Rather the Council adopts resolutions to encourage and create mechanisms to address issues under their jurisdiction. As members of this committee, delegates are encouraged to navigate these limitations, spearhead discussions assessing the situation at hand, and draft resolution frameworks that work to protect the rights and dignity of global citizens.

Effective debate in this community requires more than just general support for human rights. Delegates will need to reference existing resolutions, propose specific and realistic items, and work across blocs to find common ground. Strong resolutions not only come from passion but from structure and an understanding of what this Council can and cannot do, and how to move forward.

Agenda Introduction

The exploitation of children in armed conflicts continues to pose a severe threat to fundamental human rights. The United Nations estimates that “tens of thousands of boys and girls are recruited and used as child soldiers by armed forces and armed groups in conflict in countries around the world.” They are serving as soldiers, informants, human shields, or being subjected to forced labor and sexual abuse. Many of these children are recruited through coercion, abduction, or manipulation especially in regions where poverty along with the lack of education make them especially vulnerable.

However, this issue persists across multiple continents, affecting both developing and developed states either directly or indirectly. Countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Myanmar, Nigeria, and the Central African Republic continue to face ongoing challenges with child recruitment in conflicts. Meanwhile, states like Norway, Canada, France, Sweden, and Switzerland have been contributing significantly to international efforts for prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

The presence of this issue in diverse regions demonstrates its complex scope and the need for a coordinated response that balances security measures with the protection and rehabilitation of child victims. More importantly, addressing this problem is essential to break cycles of violence and to further uphold international human rights standards.

This issue cannot be solved with governments alone. Effective change requires cooperation between local communities, NGOs, and international organizations, each playing a distinct role in addressing the problem. Programs focused on education, mental health support, and job training are essential because they help former child soldiers regain a sense of normalcy and build skills for independent lives. However these interventions must be tailored to the specific cultural and social contexts of affected regions to be truly effective.

Moreover addressing root causes such as poverty, lack of access to education, and ongoing conflict is critical. These factors create an environment where recruitment thrives and perpetuates cycles of violence. Without confronting these underlying issues, prevention efforts risk being short-lived.

Each delegate in this committee is encouraged to examine both national and international strategies to support children psychologically, create better frameworks, improve monitoring, and establish better reporting mechanisms. This agenda at hand is crucial to eliminate the recruitment and use of children in warfare and protect the rights and dignity of every child worldwide.

Letter from the Chairs

Dear Delegates of the United Nations Human Rights Council:

Welcome to GECMUN XII! We are honored to serve as your chairs for the United Nations Human Rights Council.

My name is Yudan Sun, a sophomore at Korea International School, Jeju Campus, and I am truly honored to be able to serve as the Head Chair of HRC in GECMUN XII. This is my 5th year involved in the Model UN circuit, and my MUN journey involved serving as a chair in diverse prestigious conferences, including TASMUN, YMUNK, JejuMUN, and many more. I feel that the opportunity for me to chair GECMUN this year will be able to result in a fruitful experience for not only myself but all of you, and I cannot wait to get to know all of you delegates at the conference.

Alongside me are Soobin Bae, a junior student at Korea International School Jeju, and Audrey Lam, a senior at International Christian School, Hong Kong. Together, we bring years of MUN experience, having participated in various conferences both as delegates, chairs, and members of the secretariat and we are excited to guide you through this committee.

This year, UNHRC will focus on Combating the Exploitation of Children in Armed Conflicts. As delegates, you will be expected to represent your assigned countries accurately, engage in thoughtful debate, and collaborate to draft resolutions addressing one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time.

We hope that this committee will challenge you to think critically about complex global dynamics and encourage you to consider how policy and international cooperation intersect. GECMUN XII is an opportunity to develop your public speaking, research, and diplomatic skills. We expect you to come prepared and make the most of every moment in our committee. Should you have any questions or need any assistance before or during the conference, please feel free to reach out to any of us.

We look forward to meeting you all soon and to witnessing the insightful debates and solutions you will bring to the table.

Best regards,

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United Nations Human Rights Council, GECMUN XII

Key Terms

Child Soldier

A person under the age of 18 who is recruited or used by armed forces in any capacity, including but not limited to fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies, or for sexual purposes.

DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration)

A post-conflict strategy that involves taking weapons from combatants (disarmament), formally removing them from armed groups (demobilization), and assisting them in resuming normal life (reintegration), with special provisions for children.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Harmful acts directed at individuals based on their gender. In conflict zones, girls and boys are both vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse by armed actors.

Geneva Conventions

A set of international treaties forming the core of IHL, protecting civilians and non-combatants during armed conflict.

Grave Violations Against Children

Six categories identified by the UN as particularly severe abuses: killing or maiming, recruitment or use of children in armed forces, sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools or hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

A set of rules that seek to limit the effects of armed conflict, including protections for civilians and children, as codified in the Geneva Conventions and their protocols.

Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs)

Armed organizations that are not part of the official military or police of a country. These groups are often responsible for recruiting children in conflict zones.

Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM)

A UN-led system that collects and verifies information on violations committed against children during armed conflicts, helping ensure accountability.

Historical Background

The exploitation of children in armed conflicts is a phenomenon that has existed for centuries and has only started to warrant international attention and concern in the last hundred years. Such grievances faced by these children include the recruitment of minors, maiming, sexual violence, abduction and displacement.

American Civil War

Many parties in prominent historical conflicts have utilized children as a means to gain victory for their respective sides. The American Civil War was one such conflict in which as many as 20% of recruiters were under 18, making them children by contemporary standards. Another notable example would be the Second World War where children were used as soldiers on both sides of the conflict. Nazi Germany's Hitler Youth used ideology to radicalise young boys into fighting for the army, training them first to assist soldiers and later deploying them on missions considered suicidal. American and Soviet troops also recruited underaged boys like the 'Sons of the regiment' of the Red Army.

World War II

Furthermore, World War II also saw the rise of violence towards children beyond the battlefield. Wartime discrimination played a crucial role in the weaponisation of sexual violence towards enemy youth, especially towards young girls. Children in concentration camps during the Holocaust were targets of rape before their murder and sexual slavery involving young girls known as "comfort women" as young as 14 years old was rampant in Japanese occupied territories.

Post-War Conflicts

Following Allied Victory, decolonisation efforts and subsequent armed conflicts continued to exploit children. This was especially prominent in African states following colonial legacy with Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Liberia, Eritrea, and Burundi amongst others reportedly having several thousands of child soldiers alone, numbers that exclude the accounts of atrocities committed to children caught in the crossfire. Sierra Leone in particular, has continued to exploit their child population in armed conflicts since the 1990. Its civil war triggered by political instability led to the creation of armed groups such as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), both of which committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during the conflict from 1991-2002. An estimated 10,000 children were recruited to join these ranks.

Current State of Affairs

Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC)

A UN treaty that outlines the rights that all children are entitled to, adopted in 1989 and ratified by all countries but the United States. Children, by the standards of the convention, are persons under 18. The treaty reinforces that the fundamental rights of all children should be protected indiscriminately, including rights to survival, non-discrimination and protection separate to the rights of adults. Those who ratify the Convention legally commit to upholding its standards and if they fail to do so, can face consequences and scrutiny from the international community.

Rome Statute

The treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC). It defines the conscription of children under 15 in hostilities as a war crime and has prosecuted parties for committing war crimes on these grounds before. Furthermore, other acts considered criminal by the Statute are deliberate attacks on civilians and sexual violence which are often also common atrocities in conflict zones. Because states are legally bound to the ratification of this statute, countries found guilty of violating the Rome Statute are subject to international law and the ICC's jurisdiction.

Security Council Resolution 1612

A UN resolution adopted in 2005 that called for the creation of monitoring and reporting mechanisms for the recruitment of child soldiers and pushes for international cooperation. Its passing established the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms (MRM) on grave violations against children in armed conflict. While the MRM has proven effective in its ability to identify areas of concern, its ability to actively end child enlistment is limited since it does not provide immediate nor measurable solutions.

Child Soldiers Prevention Act (CSPA)

A US law adopted in 2008 that is aimed to stop child conscription in foreign countries. This piece of legislation allows the US to be involved in efforts to recover and rehabilitate child soldiers, conduct diplomatic missions and investigations in nations using child soldiers. However, the effectiveness and enforcement of such efforts are difficult to measure especially due to the United State's prioritisation of national interests, especially under the new Trump Administration. The U.S may choose to focus on protecting their alliances and own interests, rather than risking angering their allies or spending more money on countries outside their own.

Peacekeeping Missions

The UN has deployed peacekeeping missions in recent years in order to free children associated with armed forces. The three key missions, UNMISS, MONUSCO, and MINUSCA, have reportedly helped over 100,000 children across the world including nations such as South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. Peacekeeping troops are deployed to protect civilians, however, there have also been reports of human rights abuses

perpetuated by UN peacekeepers which has led some to question the morality of these operations.

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (OPAC)

The growing reports of child exploitation in various regions of the world across Africa, Asia and the Middle East garnered much needed international attention. As a response to the growing concerns for human and children's rights, the Human Rights Council drafted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (OPAC), signed in 2000. This legislation was the first to set the international standard that the age of recruitment be raised to 18 and sets the precedent for how cases of child exploitation should be handled as well as establishing a framework to further protect children and their rights.

Stances of Parties

Bhutan

Bhutan maintains a peaceful stance and does not have a standing army involved in conflict. It has acceded to international child rights instruments (such as the OPAC) and promotes the protection of children through national legislation and community-based education programs such as the National Plan of Action for Child Protection and the Child Care and Protection Act 2011. Bhutan supports multilateral cooperation to end child exploitation globally, emphasizing the importance of mental health care and community reintegration.

Brazil

Brazil has ratified OPAC and supports child protection through both domestic policies and foreign aid. The Brazilian government has participated in international forums, promoting regional cooperation in Latin America to strengthen child protection systems. Although not directly involved in armed conflict, Brazil is active in peacekeeping operations in the form of military personnel. However, past operations from these soldiers such as the peacekeeping forces of MINUSTAH in Haiti have had a history of having reportedly committed human rights abuses against Haitian civilians including arbitrary detention, sexual abuses towards women and children.

Central African Republic

The Central African Republic remains one of the most affected countries by child soldier recruitment. Armed groups (such as ex-Seleka and Anti-balaka factions) continue to use children in combat roles. The government has signed action plans and initiated DDR programs, but the ongoing conflict and weak state institutions hamper enforcement. Such efforts include the Child Protection Code which criminalises child recruitment and recognises children in armed forces as victims.

Canada

Canada has staunchly opposed the exploitation of children, hosting conferences to discuss the issue on an international level, providing financial support to institutions working to end child recruitment, and supporting international and domestic initiatives to prevent such violations from being committed. Having helped create the OPAC and developing the Vancouver Principles, Canada has not only worked to end child enlistment but has also voiced their desire to assist in reintegration and rehabilitation for affected peoples.

China

China has ratified the OPAC and generally opposes the use of child soldiers. It maintains a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, however, which sometimes limits its involvement in international efforts targeting human rights abuses in conflict zones. Recently, China has become more involved in international dialogue regarding conflict resolution which could be attributed to their growing Belt and Road Initiative in which conflict in neighboring

regions could impact the nation's own interests. China promotes economic development and education as long-term solutions to child exploitation.

Colombia

Territorial disputes between armed groups in Colombia have led to the recruitment and killing of child soldiers in the country, despite Colombia's ratification of the CRC and the OPAC. While the Colombian government has tried to develop positive policies to address this issue, such as the Petro government claiming that they will not attack encampments housing child soldiers, it has done little to end the continuation of human rights violations enacted against children. Armed groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, including the FARC and the Gaitanistas, have used means of coercion and abduction to recruit children.

Costa Rica

Costa Rica, known for abolishing its military and committing to peace, condemns the use of children in armed conflict. The country actively supports global disarmament and human rights initiatives, including implementing OPAC. Costa Rica promotes diverse strategies for affected children and advocates for peaceful conflict resolution to address conditions leading to child recruitment.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

While the government of the DRC has taken action in an effort to prevent exploitation (especially in regards to child enlistment) through prosecution and tracking mechanisms, the social and political instability of the nation leads to conflict which leads to continually rising rates of grave violations. Reports have shown that over 90% of verified human rights violations against children in the DRC are committed by armed groups.

France

Having pledged their commitment to end violence against children, France is not only a signatory of the OPAC, but has also encouraged all states to sign and uphold the Convention on the Rights of a Child.. As a permanent member of the Security Council, France has used their membership to back the passing of resolutions (such as Resolution 2601) which aim to address grave violations against children in conflict zones and has also continuously reiterated their full support of the condemnation of exploitation in armed conflicts under international law.

Germany

Germany has been an open advocate for children in conflict-affected areas having ratified the CRC and the OPAC. The country has been involved in multilateral dialogue, cooperated with UN bodies and has backed institutions to promote reintegration and the disarmament of children affected by enlistment or various other forms of violence. Germany has also shown their support for people in conflict zones through their acceptance towards refugees, housing 2.66 million as of mid 2024.

Haiti

While Haiti is not involved in an international or civil war, criminal gangs and political instability have led to the exploitation of children, particularly through forced labor and child recruitment. From 2023 to 2024, child enlistment in Haiti rose by 70%, most likely a result of high poverty rates, violence and coercion that many children face. The Haitian government has been working alongside institutions such as Unicef and the UN to strengthen child protection systems. Such efforts have resulted in the PREJEUNES programme, launched in July of 2025, is meant to prevent child recruitment and provide means for reintegration for those already affected. However, with a floundering economy and an overdependence on humanitarian assistance from other nations, child protection systems are hard to implement and maintain. Haiti has ratified OPAC and supports interventions.

India

India, as a signatory to the Convention of the Rights of Child, has taken legislative steps to combat child recruitment. Nevertheless, concerns have been raised about the treatment of children in regions affected by insurgency. India denies systemic use of child soldiers and focuses on community policing to prevent child exploitation. However, India's denial of child conscription has led to criticism from the international community. Mr Suhas Chakma, Director of Asian Centre for Human Rights said in 2013, “India effectively protected the officially designated terror groups from condemnation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child for the recruitment of child soldiers, a war crime under the international law.”

Israel

Israel has ratified both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. However, the UN has noted the grave violations against children happening in the occupied Palestinian territories amidst the ongoing military offensive. In 2024, the Israel-Palestine conflict held the highest number of grave violations against children globally with a reported 8554 abuses, 80% of which were committed by Israeli forces. Israeli attacks across the Middle East have been noted to deliberately target civilian populations, including institutions sheltering children such as schools, hospitals and churches. They have also been responsible for war crimes through the intentional killing, maiming and starving of palestinian children as part of their attack efforts.

Lebanon

Lebanon has ratified OPAC and hosts a significant refugee population, including Syrian and Palestinian children who are vulnerable to recruitment by non-state armed groups. Although the Lebanese government officially opposes the use of child soldiers, the fragile political situation complicates enforcement. Lebanon supports international efforts to expand access to education and psychological support for affected children.

Myanmar

As Myanmar continues to fight its civil war, its child population has increasingly faced human rights violations. The Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF), its related armed forces and various

armed groups have been found responsible for 90% of approximately 5141 verified grave violations committed against children. 40% of these violations were traced back to child recruitment while another 30% were for the killing and maiming of children. Given the fragmented political landscape and ongoing military conflict in the region, Myanmar has done little to address these humanitarian issues although legislation such as a joint action plan with the UN and the OPAC have both been ratified.

Nigeria

Nigeria has faced significant challenges with the use of child soldiers, especially by Boko Haram. The Nigerian government has collaborated with international agencies to rehabilitate former child soldiers, however the failure of the government to prevent child recruitment and abduction has drawn criticism. Nigeria's weak institutions leave many young people in challenging socioeconomic positions, making them vulnerable to recruitment by Boko Haram. Furthermore, the military detention of children associated with armed groups has drawn criticism. Early 2025 saw the Giwa barracks make headlines when it was reported that the military detention centre held many children, most of which were subject to arbitrary arrests.

Norway

Norway has been vocal about their condemnation of child exploitation in armed conflicts both within its borders and on the world stage. The Norwegian government has sent funding for humanitarian support to conflict stricken regions such as Ukraine, pledging a significant amount to the safeguarding of children. The country has also worked closely with UN bodies and other parties to address the issues that many children face in conflict zones. In 2015, Norway led the process of the development of the Safe Schools Declaration in the UN, aiming to protect children and education during armed conflict. Multiple international conferences have come out of this initiative and 121 states have endorsed its implementation.

Palestine

The State of Palestine is a party to OPAC and has committed to protecting children from armed conflict. However, international organizations have raised concerns about the involvement of minors in protests, as well as their detention by Israeli forces. The Palestine Authority emphasizes community development while also calling for greater international protection for Palestinian children living under occupation. Political fragmentation between the West Bank and Gaza complicates coordinated enforcement of child protection measures.

Russia

Despite having ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the OPAC, the Russian Federation's military offensive against Ukraine has been a point of concern for the international community regarding its perpetuation of human rights violations against children. Furthermore, reports have stated that the Kremlin has worked to militarise underaged youths, using them to support the war through ideological radicalisation and labour. Yunarmia or the Youth Army, a military youth organisation supported and funded by the government, accepts children as young

as 8 years old into their ranks where they receive military training and learn to support the causes of the motherland.

Sierra Leone

While child enlistment was extremely prominent during its civil war, Sierra Leone has worked to address past human rights violations through their implementation of child protection protocols. Sierra Leone has ratified the OPAC and has turned to post-war domestic reforms such as the Sierra Leone child rights act (2007) which aims to protect children's rights and reintegration programs for affected children who fought in previous conflicts.

Singapore

Singapore has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. Though it does not face internal armed conflict, Singapore supports international efforts to combat child soldier recruitment through its contributions to UN peacebuilding and education focused development initiatives. The government emphasizes the importance of national legislation and border control in preventing trafficking of minors in conflict-prone regions.

Somalia

Somalia has ratified child protection mechanisms such as the OPAC. However, children still face violations like enlistment by armed forces including the Somali National Army (SNA). In 2024, Somalia had the third highest number of UN-verified grave violations against children behind Israel and the DRC. Alongside child enlistment, almost 900 cases of abduction have reported as well as an “fivefold increase in the number of gang rapes” and cases of sexual violence against girls. The federal government has implemented means of reform such as child protection units within its national army but the effectiveness of such instruments has been significantly weakened by ongoing conflict and instability and the increase in violations have underscored their ineffectiveness.

South Sudan

Although the South Sudanese government has stated their commitment to preventing child exploitation beyond UN treaties such as the South Sudan Child Act, 2008, the nation continues to face a child protection crisis. Many young boys and girls face underaged recruitment and sexual violence, issues that are exacerbated by ongoing civil war and weakened institutions making the enforcement or funding of any solutions difficult. Government forces have also been accused of partaking in the abduction of children without facing consequences, acting as proof negligence towards this issue. As of February 2025, the South Sudanese government has made public statements regarding the implementation of a comprehensive action plan to further address the issue of child recruitment though its effectiveness has yet to be seen.

Switzerland

Switzerland plays a key role in international humanitarian efforts. It has consistently backed initiatives aimed at ending the use of child soldiers. As the depositary state of the Geneva

Conventions, Switzerland significantly promotes IHL and supports the MRM. In 2014, the FDFA Action Plan for the protection of children associated with armed forces or groups in armed conflict was created and Switzerland had continued to demonstrate support through funding of rehabilitation programs for former child soldiers through international NGOs and UN bodies.

Sweden

Sweden has maintained a strong stance against child exploitation. Having ratified the OPAC and promoting the rights of children on both a domestic and international front, Sweden has provided humanitarian aid and assistance to various countries in order to support victims. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has decided to adopt a new strategy for humanitarian aid going forward from 2025 to 2029 which aims to work alongside local governments and organisations to see through the delivery of aid and funding to those who are vulnerable and difficult to reach.

Syria

While Syria has ratified legislative frameworks meant to prevent child exploitation such as the Convention on the Rights of a Child, its enforcement and adherence to these standards have been proven inconsistent. National institutions lack the capacity and resources to act upon proposed child protection initiatives as a result of conflict and the children of Syria continue to face enlistment, labour, and violence as a result of inaction.

Turkey

Turkey has ratified the OPAC, which aligns its efforts with international aims to prevent the recruitment of children in armed conflict. However, the UN has raised concerns about Turkish-backed armed groups in northern Syria that reportedly use child soldiers. While the Turkish government denies involvement and highlights its support for human rights, international observers urge stronger monitoring to ensure full compliance.

Uganda

Uganda has historically experienced child exploitation crises in warfare, with the abduction of children for exploitation in armed conflicts by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) persisting as a national concern since the 1980s. The research conducted by Amnesty International revealed that over the past twelve years, the LRA has abducted more than 12,000 Ugandan children and exploited them as child soldiers or sex slaves. Despite being one of the nations with a greater population of children exposed to the threat of exploitation during warfare, the Ugandan government has been one of the less-involved nations in international actions in developing measures to mitigate the global crises of exploitation of child soldiers in armed conflicts.

United Kingdom

The UK is a strong supporter of international frameworks prohibiting the use of child soldiers. It has contributed to the drafting and enforcement of OPAC. The UK has faced scrutiny over the recruitment age of 16 in its own military, though it emphasizes that underage recruits are not

deployed into conflict. The country supports international sanctions on groups and states that recruit children for armed conflict.

United States of America

The United States has enacted the Child Soldiers Prevention Act (CSPA), which restricts military assistance to governments that recruit or use child soldiers. While the country supports the demobilization of child combatants abroad, its foreign policy has faced criticism when exceptions are made for strategic allies. The U.S. has come under fire for their continued support of Israel while vetoing UN draft resolutions on Gaza, as well as their ongoing relationship with Russia. The U.S. funds Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs in conflict zones but the Trump administration has approved cutting billions in foreign aid.

Yemen

With the recruitment of child soldiers into armed groups being exacerbated by its civil war, Yemen has failed to adhere to its ratified treaties such as the CRC and the OPAC. Reports have shown cases of child recruitment in Yemen have increased since late 2023, with activists reporting that the Houthi movement has recruited children as young as 13 years old and have had a reported 10,000 children join their ranks since 2014. While Yemen has partnered with institutions like UNICEF to try to address the issues of child recruitment, reports have indicated that such efforts have taken minimal effect. The Houthi themselves have signed an action plan with the UN in 2022 to end grave violations against children but the group demonstrated no indication of abiding by these vows. The group has also been reported to use their proximity to government institutions to support their recruitment efforts, notably through educational facilities and institutions.

Possible Solutions

Solution #1: Referencing Past Solutions

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC) remains a foundational piece of reference. It sets the minimum age of recruitment at 18 and has been signed by over 170 countries. Delegates must consider how to improve complication, expand monitoring, and strengthen enforcement by referencing this protocol. One area for reform is making states more accountable for violations even when committed by non-state actors under their influence.

Solution #2: Community Rehabilitation and Reintegration

Demobilization programs often fail because they treat child soldiers as isolated individuals rather than members of larger communities. Many return to areas with no infrastructure, no jobs, and no trust. Community based reintegration addresses that gap. By funding education, states can reduce the risk of re-recruitment. This is especially important in post-conflict areas where armed groups still operate. Delegates should discuss how to structure international aid so it strengthens existing systems, rather than creating dependency.

Solution #3: Stricter Regulation of Private Military Contractors (PMCs)

PMCs often operate in legal gray zones and may train or work alongside forces using child soldiers. They are rarely held accountable under international law, and some host countries rely on them heavily due to weak militaries. Delegates should consider licensing systems through the UN or regional bodies that require human rights compliance, full transparency on contracts, and penalties for violations.

Solution #4: Expanding Regional Monitoring Mechanisms

Many international monitoring systems lack access in direct situations or cultural knowledge, which leads to underreporting. Regional organizations such as the African Union or ECOWAS have deeper ties and stronger incentives to act. They can train local monitors, share intelligence between states, and integrate child protection clauses into peacekeeping missions. Delegates must consider whether the UN should fund these efforts or simply endorse them.

Solution #5: Penalizing Arms Transfers to Groups Using Child Soldiers

Weapons fuel conflicts that rely on child labor and conscription. One way to deter recruitment is to cut off military support to groups or governments that use children in combat. Delegates can propose stronger arms trade laws, including mandatory human rights screenings and public blacklists of violators. But this solution carries tradeoffs: should major powers stop selling arms to strategic allies if they violate child protection norms what verification system would prevent false claims while ensuring accountability

Questions to Consider

1. What are the main causes behind the continued recruitment and use of children in armed conflict? How do factors such as poverty, lack of education, and weak governance contribute?
2. How can existing international mechanisms such as the OPAC, CRC, and MRM be strengthened to prevent violations more effectively?
3. In what ways can the UNHRC address the actions of non-state armed groups that are not bound by international treaties?
4. How should countries balance national sovereignty with the international community's responsibility to protect children's rights?
5. What role should major powers (e.g., permanent members of the Security Council) play in enforcing child protection when they themselves have faced criticism?
6. How can regeneration programs for former child soldiers be improved to address not only physical needs but also psychological support?
7. What ethical and legal standards should peacekeeping missions follow to ensure they protect, rather than exploit the children they are meant to serve?
8. How can international pressure or sanctions be used more effectively to hold violators accountable?
9. What responsibilities do countries with no internal conflict have in addressing child soldier recruitment elsewhere?
10. How can data collection and reporting on violations against children in conflict zones be improved to ensure transparency and accountability?
11. To what extent should international funding be tied to compliance with child protection professionals?
12. How should member states respond to violations committed by their allies or within complex political conflicts?
13. What role can regional partnerships and NGOs play in reducing child recruitment in specific areas like Sub-Saharan Africa or the Middle East?
14. How can we build community based solutions that prevent the re-recruitment of children once they have been demobilized?
15. Should the definition of child soldiers be expanded to include children exploited by gangs or other non political armed groups in areas of instability?

16. What are the long term goals that must be achieved through each resolution?

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